DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 285 454 HE 020 567

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TITLE The Creation of a Private Religious College, 1955-1985.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Church Related Colleges; Church Workers; *College Role; Economic Factors; *Educational Objectives; Education Work Relationship; Higher Education; Institutional Characteristics; *Institutional Mission; Liberal Arts; Political Influences; Private Colleges; *Religious Education
IDENTIFIERS *Christ College Irvine CA; *New Colleges

ABSTRACT

The history of Christ College Irvine (CCI), which is part of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, is discussed, with attention to the forces contributing to the formation of the new Christian liberal arts college and to assessing the nature of the school. Results of the Danforth Commission study of definitions for church-sponsored colleges are also detailed. While there was political pressure to establish the college, the church also faced financial problems. There was controversy over whether the use of an existing college in Oakland or the building of this new one near Los Angeles made better sense. While the mission statement of the college has been extensively revised since the beginning in 1976, the curriculum has remained fairly constant. CCI primarily offers educational programs that lead graduates into professional positions in the church or to graduate degrees that culminate in a position within the denomination. The only other program has been the general education degree. For the Danforth Commission Study, CCI faculty members were interviewed concerning three definitions or types of church-related colleges: Defender of the Faith, Nonaffirming College, and Free Christian College. It was found that the descriptors pertaining to the Free Christian College best fit CCI. (SW)

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THE CREATION OF A PRIVATE RELIGIOUS COLLEGE, 1955-1985

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 20-24, 1987, Washington, D.C.

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THE CREATION OF A PRIVATE RELIGIOUS COLLEGE, 1955-1985

Introduction

This paper concerns the recent founding history of a Christian liberal arts college established by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The story spans slightly more than a quarter century, a comparatively brief period in the more than 300-year history of church-related higher education in the United States.

The primary writer has drawn upon a large reservoir of documents, including official resolutions of the church body, letters sent and received among principals, personal file notes of those most closely associated with the founding of the school, and audio tapes from thirty-four personal interviews conducted with key participants in the history of Christ College Irvine (CCI). The secondary author has closely observed the growth of the college and served as the instigator of this historical study.

The endeavor has had two primary goals, the first to describe the forces which gave rise to the formation of a new Christian liberal arts college, and the second to assess the nature of the school.

Difficult Decisions

It has been reported that, of the 516 colleges formed by the time of the Civil War, most were under the sponsorship of religious denominations.[1] One nineteenth-century observer in Illinois made the comment, "A settler could hardly encamp on the prairies but a college would spring up beside his wagon."[2] At least it is not an exaggeration to acknowledge that the tradition of combining classical learning and the Christian religion into an American liberal arts curriculum was firmly rooted in our private and public colleges alike from from the

very earliest times. Today church-related colleges can be found in every form known to American higher education: small liberal arts colleges, multiversities with elaborate professional programs, and universities with large graduate schools. The vast majority, however, are small liberal arts institutions, professing to be educating the whole human person within specific religious and theological traditions. In 1955 the fascinating story about the founding of one such Christian liberal arts college began.

The research uncovered considerable struggle among various entities within The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod over the question of whether or not actually to build and operate Christ College Irvine, which is today located in Irvine, California, forty-five miles south of Los Angeles and seven miles inland from the coast. The story has its genesis in the formation of a small committee in Southern California to research the likelihood of convincing the national church body to establish a junior college near Los Angeles.[3] The Synod--the name the Lutherans use to refer to their church body--was already operating thirteen colleges, with a heavy concentration of these schools located in the Midwest. The only West Coast colleges were in Portland, Oregon, and Oakland, California, and the Oakland school was experiencing difficult times with both enrollment and finances. Thus, the hope of the committee was to encourage new interest within the Synod in the greater population base of the southern part of California. While at no time did the folks in Southern California suggest the college in Oakland ought to be closed, in November 1970 that is exactly the step the Synod did take prior to establishing the new institution of Irvine.[4]

Two significant forces had been at work, the first was political and the second was economical. The Synod establishes policy through national conventions which are attended by regionally elected delegates. In the successive conventions

of 1962 and 1965 the voters overwhelmingly approved the building of a junior college in Southern California. Thus, political pressure to spend the dollars required to establish a new college mounted rapidly. In 1964 the Irvine property was purchased, following the careful examination of more than eighty potential sites. However, if the Synod was in general enjoying the abundance of students common to America's colleges and universities during the 1960s, it was faring far less favorably on the economic front. Significant deficits loomed.[5] Thus the administrative leadership of the church was faced with the contradiction of being directed to build a new college and to cut expenses simultaneously. Closing the college in Oakland was the first action of a series which produced heated debate within the church regarding future directions in higher education, especially on the West Coast.

In the church conventions of 1967 and 1969, the debate appeared regional in nature, seemingly involving only the Californians in controversy over whether an existing college in Oakland or the building of a new one near Los Angeles made better sense. The real issue, however, lay much deeper, and by 1969 the "argument" over Irvine and the dollars which would be required to establish the college held the national interest of the Synod. Many leaders with expertise in higher education pointed to dire forecasts of dwindling college populations to argue against building a new school at Irvine, while others with fiscal backgrounds were raising additional objections by questioning the ability of the Synod to maintain its existing colleges in a period of developing inflation.

Yet the land had been purchased and soon thereafter a supervisory board was established by the Synod, and the board in turn selected an acting administrator. By 1971 the board and acting administrator of the yet-to-be-opened college began exerting political pressure of their own on the Synod to proceed with the building of the college. The board and administrator, together with the folks who gathered

around them, became the badgering voice of fair play, constantly reminding Synod leadership of the votes one convention after another had passed in support of the construction of the Irvine school.
Furthermore, they pointed with convincing sincerity to the significant evangelism opportunities awaiting the Church in the Pacific Southwest as well as the open door to the Pacific Rim.

The headquarters of the Synod are located in Saint Louis. Administrative leadership there, including the Board for Higher Education, which is programmatic in nature and coordinates the work of the colleges; the Board of Directors, which has policy and fudiciary responsibility for the Synod; and the Commission on Constitutional Matters, which rules on alleged violations of policy, were not uniform in their posture toward the Irvine project. The Board for Higher Education almost always acted to support the Irvine school, while the Board of Directors appears to have held a more cautious attitude toward the expenditure of the millions of dollars required to build at Irvine. The Commission on Constitutional Matters and its executive officer remained the most objective throughout the months and years of tension and, in the final analysis, their objective rulings proved to be a consistent source of blessing for the advancement of the college.

Attitudes among Saint Louis executives can be seen to vary, too, with the exception of the treasurer of the Synod, who remained consistent in his opposition to the investment in California. It is the executive secretary of the Board for Higher Education, however, who deserves special mention. During the search for land prior to 1964, he was quite favorably disposed toward the project, but later his attitude reversed. Unfortunately, the failure of a positive personal relationship to develop between him and the first president of the college served to make matters worse. Perhaps responsibility for the strife lay on both sides,

for the first president at Irvine is said to have repeatedly exaggerated facts in his enthusiasm for the dream of the college, while the executive secretary appears to have failed to provide adequate guidance for the first-time college president. Without a doubt, much of the difficulty arose out of the difference in perspective, one being midwestern without the benefit of west coast exposure and the other being coastal without benefit of in-depth midwestern experience.

An additional problem for the school's president was his being caught in the middle of the vying for power among the several boards and personalities within the Synod, a circumstance he was not prepared to handle and which finally led to his resignation in 1979 from the presidency of the college which he labored so intensely to bring to life.[6] Nevertheless, the researcher has come to agree with the opinion expressed by a number of those interviewed, namely, that without the first president's dogged persistence, the college would never have been opened. He was a burr in the saddle of the church body, a burr which drove the Synod to do what in fact it had said in so many conventions between 1962 and 1975 it wanted to do. The college was opened in 1976 as Christ College Irvine, with the final favorable nod coming from the Synod just three days prior to the time classes were scheduled to begin.

Although the college experienced initial delays as a result of the factors reviewed in the preceding paragraphs, in more recent years the development pace has quickened, and today the campus consists of twelve buildings and athletic fields valued at $14 million, land not included. Additional building plans are in the immediate offing. The 113.6-acre land site, located in Irvine, California, represents a substantial dollar value. The major construction of the past several years, together with the growth of the student body to 500 and the winning of full accreditation, bear witness to the fact that the problems of past years associated

with forming the college are behind the institution, and the Synod seems appropriately pleased with the Lutheran-College-in-Irvine project today.

Academic Character and Mission Statement

The previous paragraphs have identified the primary forces which gave rise to the institution. The issues of money and location dominated the agenda from 1955 to 1976. Only for a brief moment during those formative years was there any serious question over the academic character of the institution. That single exception was whether the school would be a Bible institute as opposed to a liberal arts college, and this, the researcher has concluded, was as much a matter of semantics as of substance. That is to say, the academic character of the college appears to have been taken for granted by the majority of principals and the convention delegates from the very beginning: the school would be coeducational and would prepare professional workers for the church through a traditional liberal arts curriculum as utilized in the other colleges of the Synod. The earliest expressions of CCI's mission of the college did, however, cause some controversy and misunderstandings chiefly because of the language employed to convey the ideas and because of a perceived concentration on the part of the school's earliest leaders to focus on the religious nature of the mission of the school apart from the general educational purposes of the institution. Voices of concern were raised over this issue. The researcher speculates, however, that these voices may at times have been protests against the building of the college for financial and political reasons disguised in academic language, for it does not appear to have been long at truly serious issue that the college would be other than traditional liberal arts. A lack of familiarity with traditional liberal arts academic language appears to have been the true problem for the first president

as he set out to frame the early mission statements. As the years have passed, the wording has become more balanced among the various components of the liberal arts pursuits, including religious studies.

While the mission statement of the college has undergone extensive revision over the years since the college was opened in 1976, the curriculum has remained fairly constant: in the main, CCI offers educational programs which lead graduates into professional positions in the church or on to graduate degrees which culminate in a position within the denomination. The only other program has been the general education degree. It should be noted that the components of the professional churchwork educational programs represent a classical mixture of the arts and sciences. The most recent endorsements of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges suggest that, although the mission statement may have appeared to convey a Bible-institute orientation at one time, the current mission statement and the content of the curriculum are truly liberal arts in character.[7]

It is apparent that the college inherited many of its present characteristics from the parent church body, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which has other colleges dating back to 1847. The Synod has exerted considerable influence upon CCI through its Board for Higher Education and Board of Directors. It is likewise apparent that the founding president of CCI gave a certain personality to the school. An interim executive officer of the college, who served as acting president for one year following the resignation of the first president, brought his interpretation to the college by virtue of the educational goals and objectives which were adopted during his year of leadership. The most recent five years, dating back to the inauguration of the school's second president, have also added to the existing character of CCI. Together with these three leaders, a day-by-day influence upon the nature of the college has been brought by the faculty and

students, for they, too, have participated in shaping the institution as course syllabi were written, school policies were drafted, and student organizations and activities were created.

The Danforth Study[8]

Comments shall now be addressed to an in-depth consideration of the nature of Christ College Irvine as a church-related liberal arts institution in the light of the definitions for church-sponsored colleged identified by The Danforth Commission, namely, 1) DEFENDER OF THE FAITH; 2) NONAFFIRMING COLLEGE; and 3) FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.

Christ College Irvine faculty members interviewed for the present study and several individuals related to the study on the synodical level were requested to respond verbally to the several descriptors comprising each of the three definitions or types. Two facts emerged uniformly: Christ College Irvine does not belong within the NON-AFFIRMING COLLEGE category, and the other two categories, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH and FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE are not mutually exclusive, the descriptors within the two latter categories tending to overlap, in the opinions of those interviewed. Nevertheless, a pattern for CCI did become evident from the interviews and is summarized in the paragraphs to follow.

Ten descriptors comprise the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH definition. Each interviewee to whom this subject was addressed was asked to respond to the degree to which a given descriptor could accurately be applied to CCI. The first descriptor elicited more response than any of the other descriptors in this category or in the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE category. The first descriptor states that a DEFENDER OF THE FAITH COLLEGE *prepares students chiefly for professional positions in the church.* There was uniform agreement that the

words do describe CCI accurately. However, the question evoked discussion regarding the future of the college. The question, "Should CCI continue to have so 'narrow' a mission?" was touched upon by every respondent without specific request to do so. The Synod president said,

> While Synod's educational institutions were designed to prepare students for church work, a growing interest has sprung up for non-church work programs. Ideally, I support general education. Church work preparation in isolation is no good. However, the student body needs to be Lutheran. I would like to see two-thirds church work students and 85 percent Lutheran students at CCI.[9]

A former Synod president stated,

> I believe that a Christian liberal arts college which is Lutheran, which is biblical--I believe a college of that kind, apart from preparing church workers, is valuable. It's when they become secular that I am opposed to them. The question the college needs to ask is, "How much sawdust can the farmer put in the oats before the horse dies?"[10]

The former chairman of the Board for Higher Education agreed, saying,

> Initially the purpose was to build schools to prepare ministers in the very narrow sense of the term. In time this has begun to change. I'm in favor of opening up, but it's very important not to lose our Lutheran identity.[11]

Without exception, the faculty members agreed. Said one, "If we can add programs like Business Administration without hurting the college financially and without giving up our Lutheran doctrinal commitment, I am in favor of doing so."[12] The researcher concludes from these uniform comments that, while Christ College Irvine is viewed as *preparing students chiefly for professional positions in the church today,* as the first descriptor for the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH COLLEGE stipulates, most respondents associated with the institution do not wish to have this remain the case. They prefer a broadened curriculum. This reflects future change for the mission of CCI.

The second descriptor from the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH category states that such a college *draws faculty and students almost entirely from the sponsoring church body.* There was agreement among all respondents that this is true of CCI. The college records indicate that all full-time faculty are members of the LCMS and 80 percent of the students are members of the LCMS.[13]

In a similar vein, the third descriptor states that such a college *assures itself of the religious commitment of prospective faculty and students.* Again all respondents agreed that this was true of CCI, particularly as regards faculty, inasmuch as the Board for Higher Education demands assurance from the Regents that a faculty prospect is in full agreement with the doctrinal position of the Synod before being called to a teaching post.[14]

The fourth descriptor from the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH category specifies that the college *sees itself as distinct from the culture around it and in tension with the culture.* Said the academic dean in response to this statement, "No. This does not describe CCI. We are not a Bible college. We identify with much of culture and are a part of the culture."[15]

The fifth descriptor states that a DEFENDER OF THE FAITH COLLEGE *is explicitly and self-consciously theistic. While conflicting religious and philosophical points of view are presented in the classroom, they are evaluated in terms of the beliefs and principles officially espoused by the institution.* While respondents agreed that the accuracy of the descriptor as applied to CCI might vary when applied to one professor or the next, there was expressed a general discomfort with the statement as describing too narrow a perspective and pedagogical practice. (The respondents much preferred statements seven and twelve from the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE category.)

The sixth descriptor indicates that a DEFENDER OF THE FAITH COLLEGE *presents religious practices such as worship as a prominent and unifying element in the academic community.* Respondents agreed that this was true of CCI. Said the executive officer of the regional accrediting agency, "The church permeates the entire life of the institution."[16]

The seventh descriptor states that a DEFENDER OF THE FAITH COLLEGE *requires that students attain the equivalent of a major or a minor in religion in addition to the concentration in a chosen field.* This is not true of CCI. According to the college catalog, CCI's students are required to take an equal amount of religion, humanities, social science and natural science in the core curriculum, amounting to sixteen quarter hours each. No major or minor in religion is required.[17]

The eighth descriptor from the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH category states that such a college *is usually controlled by a single communion or denomination.* This, the respondents agreed, is true of CCI.

The ninth descriptor indicates that a DEFENDER OF THE FAITH COLLEGE *possesses a very clear purpose.* Again, respondents agreed that this was true of CCI, with the reservation that the issue of the breadth of the curriculum remains only partially resolved for the CCI campus. (For additional comment on this point, the reader's attention is directed to the last descriptor under FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.)

The tenth and final descriptor states that a DEFENDER OF THE FAITH COLLEGE *circumscribes the academic freedom of faculty and students.* To a limited extent respondents agreed that this is true of Christ College Irvine. The college does require its full-time professors to sign a "Statement of Limitations on Academic Freedom" which, while it does not disallow freedom of thought or expression, does prescribe the channels which a professor is to follow in exploring an idea contrary to the accepted doctrinal position of the church.[18]

Of the ten descriptors set forth by the Danforth Commission for the first type of church-sponsored higher educational institution, the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, five were, in the collective opinion of the respondents, clearly descriptive of Christ College Irvine. The five included: *1) faculty and students are almost entirely from the sponsoring church body; 2) the college assures itself of the religious commitment of faculty and students; 3) worship and other religious practices form a prominent and unifying element in the academic community; 4) control of the college is the domain of a single denomination; and 5) the mission of the college is clear.* Another descriptor, the first, was seen as accurate but no longer desirable, and the last descriptor was seen to be accurate in a very limited way.

The second category set forth by The Danforth Commission is the NON-AFFIRMING COLLEGE. Of the ten descriptors which apply to this type of institution, the respondents cited only two as being clearly accurate when applied to CCI: *1) the college offers a conventional liberal arts curriculum, and 2) the college offers a campus life which tends to reflect the normative values of contemporary culture.* The descriptors totally rejected include: *1) the college pays little attention to religion; 2) the college makes little or no reference to religion in its statement of purpose; 3) the college marks its relationship to the church chiefly by virtue of the denominational membership of the members of the board of regents; 4) the college possesses no clear sense of identity; and 5) the college serves a heterogeneous clientele.* The other three descriptors were viewed as being true of the college to a limited extent. These included: *1) the college draws faculty and students for reasons other than its church affiliation; 2) the college requires neither worship nor religion classroom attendance of its students; and 3) the college is open-minded, offering almost complete freedom in the matter of religious belief.*

The third category is entitled, FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, and has twelve descriptors. After considering the characteristics in this category, most of the respondents said that these descriptors best fit CCI. The first descriptor states that a FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE *does not control the thinking of its students.* To a person, the respondents indicated that this descriptor applies to CCI.

The second descriptor for a FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE indicates that such an institution *possesses a definite commitment to Christian beliefs.* Again, every respondent agreed that this is true of CCI.

The third descriptor states that a FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE *draws faculty and students who are attracted to a marriage of religious and academic activity.* Noting that the terms "religious" and "academic activity" are not mutually exclusive, the respondents agreed that this phrase accurately depicts the case of Christ College Irvine.

The fourth descriptor states that a FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE *surrounds its students with opportunities for full development--intellectual, religious, moral, artistic, social.* Pointing to the following statement of purpose for the school in the General Catalog, respondents fully agreed that this phrase describes CCI:

> The mission of Christ College Irvine--founded and supported by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod--is to assist students in the quest for full realization of intellectual, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual development.
>
> All instruction and programs at CCI, including a wide variety of co-curricular experiences, contribute toward the balanced development of each student. Such a broadly prepared individual will not only be capable of meeting personal challenges and adapting to inevitable change but will also bring strength to others in the tasks of home and family life, congregation, social relationships, and civic duty.

To succeed in this mission, the college provides a stimulating and highly supportive environment. The faculty are dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in education, committed to doing all within their power to assure the success of each student, and devoted to the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ among all cultures.

* CCI is committed to the liberal arts tradition. The natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and religious studies provide the core of learning which will help students think clearly, communicate effectively, and establish clear standards of intellectual integrity.

* CCI is committed to providing preparation for professional career fields for service in the Church and in society.

* CCI is committed to a cross-cultural perspective, reaching out to touch and drawing in to include students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

* CCI is committed to the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the inerrant Word of the Scriptures. The college holds that education is inadequate which does not emphasize that eternal life is a gift of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. All relationships within the CCI community are intended to reflect devout love of God and a genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor.[19]

The fifth descriptor states that the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE *does not require chapel attendance, but chapel is a focal point of campus activity.* Again, this statement was regarded as representing an accurate description of CCI.

The sixth descriptor of the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE indicates that such a college *offers courses in religion which form an integral part of the total academic program.* Again, total acceptance was noted by the respondents.

Respondents linked the concepts represented by the seventh and twelfth descriptors. The seventh descriptor includes the words, *expects students to grapple with the basic religious and philosophical questions and arrive at considered positions of their own.* The twelfth descriptor is: *stands unapologetically for religion and*

liberal education, but relies on example, persuasive presentation of ideas, and a climate of conviction, rather than conformity, to accomplish its ends. Most respondents agreed that these two phrases accurately describe both the CCI faculty as well as what in their opinion should be expected of any true liberal arts institution.

The eighth descriptor states that the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE *regards religion and liberal learning as mutually supportive.* All agreed. The academic dean stated,

> I believe CCI is a liberal arts college even more than some large, secular universities because they dismiss ethics and value structure, essential elements of the liberally educated person. The role of the liberal arts faculty is to shed light on the blind faith with which students come to college.[20]

The ninth descriptor of the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE states that such an institution *will have some faculty who are critical of the religious point of view.* In responding to this descriptor, most felt it was not true of CCI. Both the approval process of the Board for Higher Education, which requires a "Statement of Theological Adequacy," and the aforementioned "Statement of Limitation on Academic Freedom" discourage such faculty from affiliating with the CCI staff.

The tenth descriptor states that the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE *allows faculty widest freedom consistent with laws and good taste.* Again the respondents pointed to the two Statements noted in the previous paragraph to say that this descriptor is too generous to be a fully accurate appraisal of CCI. Most did indicate, however, that in their opinion the freedom enjoyed by the faculty at CCI would be far greater than that allowed on many other Christian college campuses.

The eleventh descriptor of the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE notes that such a school *receives substantial financial support from the supporting church*

body. While CCI faculty uniformly responded with a simple "yes," the Saint Louis leadership had more to say. The Synod's president said,

> There has been an erosion of commitment on the part of our people for our schools. Many now in our pews were never exposed to the system and do not value the colleges as did the people of a generation ago.[21]

In summary, ten of the twelve descriptors from the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE category were accepted as accurate descriptions of Christ College Irvine. The rejection of two descriptors from this category is consistent with choices made from the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH category. Rejected from category three were:

> *Will have some faculty who are critical of the religious point of view, and*
>
> *Allows faculty widest freedom consistent with law and good taste.*

Accepted to one degree or another from category one were:

> *Assures itself of the religious commitment of prospective faculty and students,*
>
> *Draws faculty and students almost entirely from sponsoring church body, and*
>
> *Circumscribes the academic freedom of faculty and students.*

The other descriptors affirmed from category one do not appear to be contradictory to any statement accepted from category two or three. The total listing of all descriptors accepted by the respondents includes the following:

Christ College Irvine . . .

> *1) possesses a definite commitment to Christian beliefs;*
>
> *2) draws faculty and students who are attracted to a marriage of religious and academic activity;*
>
> *3) draws faculty and students almost entirely from the sponsoring church body;*

4) assures itself of the religious commitment of prospective faculty and students;

5) circumscribes the academic freedom of faculty (to the extent that a predetermined route is prescribed for faculty to follow when wanting to present ideas which are clearly contradictory to the accepted doctrinal statements of the church);

6) does not control the thinking of the students (except by virtue of 2 and 4 above);

7) presents religious practices, such as worship, as a prominent and unifying element in the academic community; and, does not require chapel attendance, but chapel is a focal point of campus activity;

8) is controlled by a single denomination;

9) possesses a very clear purpose;

10) offers a conventional liberal arts curriculum;

11) offers a campus life which tends to reflect the normative values of contemporary culture;

12) surrounds its students with opportunities for full development--intellectual, religious, moral, artistic, social;

13) offers courses in religion which form an integral part of the total academic program;

14) expects students to grapple with the basic religious and philosophical questions and arrive at considered positions of their own; and, while standing unapologetically for religion and liberal education, relies on example, persuasive presentation of ideas, and a climate of conviction, rather than conformity, to accomplish its ends.

15) regards religion and liberal learning as mutually supportive; and

16) receives substantial support from the supporting church body.

The descriptors from the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH category and the FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE category are not mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, the respondents agree today that only three statements unique to the DEFENDER OF THE FAITH category apply to CCI, while the same people find ten of the twelve FREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE to be accurate descriptors of the institution.

Summary

The birth and growth of Christ College Irvine reflect a commitment to vision on the part of thousands of people in Southern California who comprise The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in that place and of the early presidents of the school who served to articulate that vision. Like all large organizations, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod struggled within itself regarding the wisdom of investing the enormous sums of money it knew in advance would be required to turn the Christ College Irvine dream into reality. Yet, Christ College Irvine has progressed from vision to reality, from nothing more than an idea to a beautiful Christian liberal arts college of modest size. The character of the college and its people, and the years of struggle and compromise between Saint Louis administration and West Coast leadership all testify to the value of daring to dream even in the most difficult of times and circumstances.

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